The Golden Age

James ROBINSON Paul SMITH

Richard ORY

BOOK FOUR OF FOUR

"We had it all."

— FROM THE INTRODUCTION

People tell me things. I don't know why, it's not that I'm particularly sensitive.

But if there's a problem... and even if it's obvious I won't be able to help in any way...

...People still come to me.

They told me at Christmas... about Thompson being the Ultra-Humanite.

And worse, they told me the truth about Dunbar, America's Superman.

So much for good will to all men.

...GO TO THE PRESS...TELL THEM...

"LISTEN AMERICA! TEX THOMPSON, YOUR FAVORITE MAN IN THE SENATE, IS REALLY THE ULTRA-HUMANITE."
YEAH, RIGHT. THAT'LL WORK.

AT LEAST THOMPSON DOESN'T KNOW WE KNOW, SO HE WON'T PULL A DIS-APPEARING ACT ON US. JOAN RETURNED THE DIARY TO WHERE SHE FOUND IT, RIGHT?

YEAH, SHE'S GONE BACK TO HIM... SHE'S GOING TO ACT LIKE NOTHING'S WRONG. GOD, AND I THOUGHT I HAD COURAGE.

I'M WORRIED ABOUT HER. DID YOU SEE HER FACE WHEN SHE LEFT US, LANCE? LIKE SHE WAS IN A *TRANCE*.

THIS IS WONDERFUL!

NEED A DRINK.

WE'RE NOBODIES WITHOUT OUR *MASKS*, AND WITH THEM ON, IT'S LIKE WE'VE SOMETHING TO HIDE. *WHO'LL* BELIEVE US?

WE COULD USE ALAN SCOTT'S RADIO STATION?

ALAN'S BEEN CALLED BEFORE THE *HUAC*. HE OPENS HIS MOUTH AGAINST A MEMBER OF THE SENATE AS ANTI-COMMUNIST AS THOMPSON, AND YOU KNOW HOW THAT'LL LOOK.

LOOK, IT SEEMS TO ME WE'RE AFRAID TO EVEN WHISPER WHAT'S REALLY BOTHERING US. IT'S DUNBAR, ISN'T IT? THE REAL PROBLEM'S DUNBAR...

AND WHETHER WHAT THE HUMANITE WROTE ABOUT HIM AT THE END OF HIS DIARY IS TRUE, AND HOW WE HANDLE THINGS IF IT IS--

WAIT... WHAT WAS--

AND WITH THE NEW YEAR COMES FRESH ACTIVITY FROM SENATOR TEX THOMPSON. HE HAS AGAIN SUGGESTED THAT THE MYSTERY MEN OF AMERICA COME FORTH AND PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG AT A CEREMONY IN WASHINGTON. THIS TIME THOMPSON IS BACKED UP BY A PRESIDENTIAL DECREE. PRESIDENT TRUMAN IS QUOTED AS SAYING, "WHERE'S THE HARM?"

WE CAN THEREFORE ASSUME THAT THIS GATHERING WILL BE BETTER ATTENDED THAN THOMPSON'S LAST ATTEMPT--

LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT OUR VENUE.

IF WE DECIDE TO TURN UP.

WELL, EVERYONE ELSE WILL. IGNORING THOMPSON IS ONE THING. IGNORING THE PRESIDENT'S A DIFFERENT MATTER.

BUT WHAT DO WE DO THEN? RUSH THE STAGE AND ATTACK TWO INNOCENT MEN? THAT'S HOW IT WILL LOOK.

YEAH... WE'VE GOT OUR VENUE, BUT WE HAVE TO HANDLE THE SITUATION IN THE RIGHT WAY TOO.

IF... WE GOT A MAN *INSIDE* THOMPSON'S CAMP. ONE OF US. MAYBE--

IS THERE TIME FOR THAT? THE CEREMONY'S THIS WEEK.

NO, I MEAN *ON THE DAY*. WE HAVE A MAN UP ON THE PODIUM. NOT *JUST* PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE, BUT ACTUALLY *JOINING* THOMPSON'S SUPERHEROES.

THEN WITH THE EYES OF THE WORLD ON HIM... OUR MAN REVEALS THE TRUTH... THE *WHOLE* TRUTH.

BUT...

... BUT DUNBAR WILL BE UP THERE TOO. *DUNBAR!* WHICHEVER HERO IT IS... HE OPENS HIS MOUTH AND HE'S DEAD.

YEAH, WELL... I DIDN'T SAY THE PLAN WAS PERFECT.

SO, IF THIS HAPPENS... AND I'M ONLY SAYING IF... WHICH ONE OF US WILL IT BE?

NONE OF US ARE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND AN ATTACK FROM DYNA-MAN... IT'S GOT TO BE ONE OF THE BIG GUNS.

WELL, THE BIG GUNS ARE A BIT LOW ON AMMO AT THE MOMENT. ALAN'S GOT HIS OWN WORRIES.

MAYBE TED?

MAYBE NOT. HE'S... ER... STILL NOT HIMSELF.

HHMM... BUT REX TYLER... HOURMAN. WHAT POSSIBLE PROBLEMS COULD HE HAVE?

SO, WE TELL TYLER... AND *WHO ELSE*? WHO ELSE DO WE TRUST?

NO... LOOK I'LL SPEAK TO REX, BUT THAT'S IT. THE MORE PEOPLE WE TELL, THE GREATER CHANCE THAT THE HUMANITE WILL LEARN WHAT WE'VE UNCOVERED. WHAT IF SOMEBODY THINKS IT'S ALL RIGHT TO TELL AL PRATT OR JOHNNY THUNDER... AND IT *ISN'T*?

WHAT IF THEY'VE BEEN CORRUPTED... OR THEY DO SOMETHING STUPID THAT CLUES THE HUMANITE IN?

YES, THUNDER'S CERTAINLY CAPA-BLE OF THAT.

SO FOR NOW IT'S OUR SECRET, WHILE REX PREPARES--

AND JOAN DALE ENDURES.

THAT'S RIGHT. WE WAIT UNTIL WASHINGTON.

"...AND WE GET ON WITH OUR LIVES."

I have the film stock.

And God knows somebody is going to make a movie of this if I don't.

Why not?

...OUR LIVES."

WE HAVE "FACTS," SHALL WE SAY, ABOUT A LOT OF THE HOUSE MEMBERS.

A FEW WHISPERED WORDS AND I'M SURE WE COULD GET THEM TO TURN THEIR ATTENTIONS ELSE-WHERE.

ELSEWHERE? ANOTHER POOR GUY LIKE CHARLIE BOWLES?

HE WAS A WRITER FOR ME. *WAS* UNTIL HE KILLED HIMSELF.

NO, I'M NOT RUNNING FROM THIS.

LET THEM DO THEIR WORST.

"LIVES."

SO WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

YES, OF COURSE I CARE. I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU.

BUT I'VE A LIFE NOW, JON. YOU OBVIOUSLY HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THAT.

NO, I'M *NOT* SAYING IT'S OVER. I'M SAYING...OH... I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* I'M SAYING.

LOOK, THIS OBVIOUSLY *ISN'T* THE TIME TO DECIDE *ANYTHING*. ARE YOU GOING TO WASHINGTON? WE COULD MEET THERE, MAYBE... TALK THINGS THROUGH.

AND LIBBY, I PROMISE YOU... I REALLY HAVE CHANGED.

" LIVES."

NOW I HAVE THE POWER... HAVE TO BETTER CONTAIN IT.

A SMALLER ROD. COSMIC ROD.

WONDERFUL.

WHAT? KNOWING WHO THOMPSON REALLY IS? WHO DUNBAR REALLY--

NO, WONDERFUL THAT WHEN THE FIGHTING STARTS... CAPTAIN TRIUMPH WILL LIVE AGAIN.

NO, DON'T LEAVE ANY WINDOWS OPEN. I'LL GET IN AND GET THE DIARY. NO PROBLEM.

BUT JOAN...

"...ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?"

THE POWDER. LAY OFF. A WHILE.

ARE YOU TELLING *ME* WHAT TO *DO*?

NO. I--

WELL DON'T EVEN *THINK* ABOUT *STARTING*.

...EXCITING NEWS THAT ON ALLEGIANCE DAY, HOURMAN WILL *NOT ONLY* BE PLEDGING, BUT *REVEALING* HIS IDENTITY AND ACTUALLY *JOINING* MY RANKS...

...WHEN HE WILL MAKE A GIFT TO AMERICA OF THE *MIRACLO FORMULA*.

OH YEAH... I'VE GOT A GIFT FOR YOU, THOMPSON. TOMORROW.

TOMORROW...

...TOMORROW.

...THE DAY THE SUPERHEROES CAME TO *WASHINGTON.*

THANKS FOR DOING THIS, TUBBY.

HEY, S'NOTHING. FOR OLD TIMES, JOHNNY. THE *BEST TIMES.*

YEAH... THE BEST.

LOOK... I CAN'T SAY TOO MUCH...

BUT IF THINGS START HAPPENING... AND YOU'LL KNOW WHAT I MEAN IF THEY DO...

MAKE SURE YOU FILM IT ALL.

JOHNNY... JOHNNY... IT'S BEEN AN *AGE.*

AND A HALF, DIANA. SO HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?

I'M THINKING OF GETTING MARRIED. HE'S A PRIVATE EYE. A RASCAL AND A CHARMER. JUST MY TYPE.

ERR... JOHNNY... ARE YOU OKAY?

I'M FINE.

Libby.

EXCUSE ME, OFFICER.

YES? AND WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?

I'M A HERO... A *SUPER* HERO. I'VE COME TO PLEDGE... I--

THEY ARE HEROES, SONNY. *YOU* AREN'T OLD ENOUGH TO VOTE. WHAT'S YOUR NAME THEN? WHICH HERO ARE YOU?

I HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF ONE YET... I...

LOOK, THEY'LL BE SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS AFTERWARDS, BOY. NICE TRY, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT 'TIL THEN.

RUN ALONG, ALL RIGHT?

HE *WON'T* GIVE UP. THIS YOUNG MAN'S DETERMINED, IF NOTHING ELSE.

HE *IS* A HERO. HE'LL *PROVE* HE *IS*.

THERE HE IS... THERE'S TEX.

THAT ISN'T TEX, BOB... REMEMBER THAT. TEX WAS OUR BRAVE FRIEND. HE WAS A HERO.

BUT HE'S DEAD NOW.

THE HUMANITE'S DEAD TOO. HE JUST DOESN'T KNOW IT...

...YET!

DID YOU GET THE DIARY, HONEY?

EASY... EASY AS PIE. BUT...

...HAVE YOU SEEN JOAN?

NO, I WAS TRYING TO FIND HER EARLIER TOO.

IT'S LIKE SHE'S AVOIDING US.

LANCE, I'M SCARED...

...FOR JOAN. SHE'S SO DEPENDENT... VULNERABLE... SO UNLIKE ME.

I'M SCARED OF WHAT THIS HAS DONE TO HER MIND.

HELL, HONESTLY, I'M SCARED FOR ALL OF US.

ALL I KNOW IS... WHATEVER HAPPENS...

I WON'T LET ANYTHING HARM Y--

MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. FELLOW HEROES. I AM JOAN DALE, MISS AMERICA... AND I LOVE THIS COUNTRY.

AMERICA.

WHAT THIS WORD... THIS LAND MEANS IS AS VARIED AND DIVERSE TO ITS PEOPLE, AS THE DIVERSITY OF THOSE PEOPLE THEMSELVES.

AMERICA CAN BE AN IDEAL... OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION... OF BASIC HUMAN LIBERTIES.

JOAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING... WE HAVEN'T STARTED YET.

YOUR WOMAN... WHAT IS SHE...?

AMERICA IS TAP AND JAZZ AND BASEBALL.

IT'S A PURE HONEST ENERGY... A LIFEFORCE STRETCHING FROM HOLLYWOOD TO THE HEARTLAND TO HARLEM.

BASED ON THE DREAMS OF PIONEERS, OUTCASTS AND PILGRIMS. FUELED BY THEIR STRENGTH... AND SPIRIT.

...SPIRIT THAT COURSES THROUGH OUR VEINS. SPIRIT THAT FLOWS THROUGH OUR RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS... THAT BLOWS ACROSS THE PRAIRIES.

THAT SPIRIT... THAT DREAM IS HERE TODAY... IN YOU, MY FELLOW HEROES... IT'S BEATING IN YOUR HEARTS. AMERICA.

THIS VAST LAND FOUNDED ON THE BASIC RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

SOMETIMES IT TAKES A WAR TO REMIND US OF THE PRECIOUS FREEDOMS INHERENT IN THIS LAND. SOMETIMES...IT TAKES SACRIFICE.

QUITE A SPEECH.

YES, I DIDN'T REALIZE SHE HAD IT IN HER, TO BE HONEST. LISTEN, SHE BELIEVES *EVERY* WORD TOO.

A SACRIFICE I AM, TODAY, PREPARED TO MAKE...

OH, JOAN... NO, DON'T. I WAS SUPPOSED TO...

...BY REVEALING THAT MY COLLEAGUES HAVE IN THEIR POSSESSION THE DIARY OF THIS MAN...IN WHICH HE ADMITS THAT THE REAL TEX THOMPSON IS DEAD AND THAT *HE* IS ACTUALLY THE CRIMINAL GENIUS THE ULTRA-HUMANITE, WHO--

W--?

STOP HER! SHUT *HER* UP!

NO... NOT AGAIN.

JOAN! MOVE! **JOAN! RUN!**

WHO FURTHER TOOK ANOTHER VILLAIN'S BR--

STOP YOU. SHUT YOU.

R-ROBOTMAN? **STOP!** *WHAT* ARE YOU--

SAID TOO MUCH.

ROBOTMAN... IT'S THOMPSON... HE'S THE ENEMY. DON'T YOU SE--

ANOTHER VILLAIN'S BRAIN...THE GREATEST VILLAIN...

TOO MUCH.

...PUT IT IN THE BODY O--

MANIAC!!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, PLEASE REMAIN SEATED. THIS IS ALL A MISTAKE. JOAN...MISS AMERICA WAS... SICK... CRAZY. THIS CAN ALL BE EXPLAI--

EXPLAIN? I'LL EXPLAIN, YOU SONUVVA BITCH.

MOTHER OF GOD.

HORRIBLE.

FAIR PLAY

JOAN... SHE'S

PEOPLE... *HEROES!* LISTEN... *BELIEVE*. MISS AMERICA *WAS* TELLING THE TRUTH. THIS *IS* THE ULTRA-HUMANITE. HE TOOK THOMPSON'S *BODY* AND PUT *HIS* BRAIN IN IT.

AS HE DID WITH *DUNBAR*... *DYNAMAN*...

...AND THE *BRAIN* OF **ADOLF HITLER!**

ENOUGH!

ENOUGH!!

ENOUGH OF THE *SMILES* AND *LIES*... THE PRETENSE TO *JEW* AND *BLACK*, THAT BECAUSE THEY WERE AMERICANS I SAW THEM AS ANYTHING BUT *INFERIOR*.

AND THE SPEECHES... THEY *DIDN'T* WORK THE *FIRST* TIME. *WHY*... ***WHY*** DID I *EVER* THINK THEY'D WORK *THIS* TIME?

Hitler's body had been burnt in the bunker by his underlings, after Thompson had killed him and left the scene. At least THAT was the STORY.

The TRUTH was that the body had been burnt to hide the signs of SURGERY... an empty skull cavity. The truth is that the DEVIL hovers above me... in the body of a GOD.

And my blood runs cold.

NO MORE TALK. I AM OVERMAN... *DYNAMAN*. I'VE THE POWER I'VE *ALWAYS DREAMED OF*.

TIME TO BEGIN *USING IT*... TO GET WHAT I *WANT*.

AND *ALL* I WANT IS ***EVERY-THING!***

SO MR. SCOTT, YOU REALIZE THAT BY REFUSING TO SUPPLY THE NAMES OF WRITERS IN YOUR EMPLOY WHOM YOU BELIEVE TO HAVE COMMUNIST TIES, YOU DO, IN TURN, RISK BEING CITED FOR CONTEMPT--

OH, I HAVE CONTEMPT ALL RIGHT... FOR THIS WHOLE SORRY FIASCO.

YOU PEOPLE SIT THERE AND SPEW OUT ANY FILTHY LIE THAT SUITS YOUR NEEDS... AND NOBODY CAN TOUCH YOU.

THIS... THIS IS NOTHING BUT A WITCH HU--

...A...ER... A...WITCH HUNT.

YOU'RE USING SPECIAL PRIVILEGE TO...TO DENY INNOCENT PEOPLE THEIR BASIC CONSTITUTIONAL FREEDOMS. THIS "*WHOEVER HAS THE BIGGEST MUSCLES IS RIGHT*" NONSENSE HAS TO STOP.

IT'S... *ER*... E...EXACTLY WHAT COST THIS COUNTRY COUNTLESS LIVES AND DOLLARS, TRYING TO ABOLISH IT OVERSEAS.

AND NOW YOU TRY... *UH*... TO DRAPE IT IN THE AMERICAN FLAG AND PASS IT OFF--

LADIES, GENTLEMEN. WE'LL HAVE TO POSTPONE THE REST OF THIS HEARING.

IT APPEARS A... *FIRE DRILL* IS TAKING PLACE.

FOOLS.

GH--

KILLED HER!

PAULA, WAIT! DON'T!

YOU KILLED JOAN.

IS THAT THE *BEST* YOU CAN DO? THAT AND *KILL* GIRLS WHO ARE SICK WITH STRESS AND HEARTACHE?

ENJOY KILLING WOMEN?

WELL, HERE I AM.

WHAT ARE YOU *WAITING* FOR?

AL... JOHNNY... YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME, THIS REALLY IS A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.

I'VE GOT TO GO AFTER DANNY... REASON WITH HIM.

GET HOURMAN, HE'S OBVIOUSLY A RED... WHOLE THING SMACKS OF A COMMIE TRICK. FIND OUT WHO HE'S IN LEAGUE WITH. STOP THEM.

YOU HEARD HIM. IT'S ALL A MISTAKE.

YEAH, IT'S GOTTA BE A MISTAKE.

IT'S GOTTA.

YOU SAID YOU'D PROTECT HER... YOU PROMISED. BUT SHE NEEDS US... CAPTAIN TRIUMPH.

TOUCH THE BIRTHMARK. GO ON. DO IT.

YOU'RE LYING.

WHY ARE YOU LYING?

STOP HIM!

STOP HIM? WHO HIM?

HOURMAN...THE *BIG* ONE. *KILL* HIM IF YOU *HAVE* TO BUT STOP HIM. HE'S SAYING WE WERE WRONG...*FOOLED.*

I *BELONG*. I... *NEVER* BELONGED *BEFORE*. THOMPSON'S DREAM... IT *CAN'T* BE WRONG.

MASTER... JOHNNY... THINK, PERHAPS YOU WERE--

DON'T YOU *DARE* QUESTION ME... **ME**... JUST *DO AS I SAY.*

DO IT. STOP HOURMAN. **STOP HIM.**

MUST OBEY.

...I MUST... I...N...NN...

OH... W...

OH... WHAT HAVE I DONE?

...ZZZZZZ!!!

LISTEN, AL... THINK.

REASON YOU *WEREN'T* SELECTED... THOMPSON'S SUPERMAN. YOU'RE *ALREADY* ATOMIC. *DIARY* SAID SO. *YOUR* BODY WOULD'VE *POISONED* HITLER'S BRAIN.

NO...BRAIN AND BODY... TRANSFORMED *SIMUL-TANEOUSLY*...HAD TO BE.

AND YOU... *LUCKY* YOU WEREN'T THE ONE...THEY *KILLED* POOR DUNBAR TO DO IT.

LIES...ALL ***LIES.***

SHUT YOUR--

OH AL, MY FRIEND, LOOK AT YOU.

HAHA, DENIAL IN THE FACE OF REASON. BLIND OBEDIENCE. I LOVE THAT IN A SOLDIER.

WHAT A GREAT LITTLE NAZI YOU WOULD HAVE MADE.

HOURMAN... I... I'M...

FORGET IT, AL...

...JUST BRING HIM DOWN.

PAY!

HHG

FEH!

A RIPTIDE OF PANIC. ALAN SCOTT *FIGHTS* IT... *HAS* TO... FIGHT HIS WAY *THROUGH*. HE *MUST*... REACH IT... *MUST* REACH...

...THE *NEWSROOM*... FOR *SOMETHING* HE LEFT THERE.

ESCAPE...

...HAVE TO. DIFFERENT BODY. DIFFERENT FACE...

...BEGIN AGAIN.

THOMPSON!

WHA?... K--

KIRK?

NO.

MANHUNTER.

HE'S GOING TO KILL HER, LANCE. YOU SEE?

TOUCH THE BIRTHMARK. YOU HAVE TO. TOUCH IT.

YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU? I DON'T NEED YOU, MICHAEL.

I'VE NEVER NEEDED YOU.

NO, WHAT ARE Y--

PERHAPS *THIS* WILL PROVE IT.

LANCE!

WRONG CHOICE.

WRONG.

LANCE... *BROTHER*, HE'LL *KILL* YOU.

FIGHT ME?

I didn't think it would be like this. Didn't... think...

So many fallen. Many. I film... I see...

I see Dynaman and the Human Bomb trade explosive punches.

Twenty blows into the fight... I see it's Victor.

SO MANY FALLEN...

WITHOUT HIS GOGGLES HE CANNOT SEE. WITHOUT THEM HE'S USELESS.

DR. MID-NITE, A BLIND MAN... DESPERATE NOT TO STUMBLE.

ONCE, DURING THE WAR, THE RED BEE HAD A STRANGE DREAM WHERE HE DIED.

SEVEN YEARS LATER THE DREAM COMES TRUE.

DOLLMAN...

...BROKEN...LIKE A CHINA NAME-SAKE.

JONATHAN LAW'S LAST THOUGHT...

...IS WHAT A GREAT BOOK THIS WOULD HAVE MADE.

SNAP

WONDERFUL.

EASY.

DYNAMAN'S FISTS HAD HURT HIM.

BUT HE'D FELT WORSE... ENDURED MORE...

IN EGYPT... ANCIENT EGYPT.

WHEN HE WAS A KING.

AARRRHH!

HE'S LIKE A SAVAGE... HAWKMAN...

... HE'S DOING IT... BEATING...

...WHEN HE WARRED.

AND FOUGHT.

FOUGHT HARD.

OF COURSE...THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.

AND ON THE GROUND, A SCARED YOUNG MAN... MAKES THE BUTTERFLIES IN HIS STOMACH DON THEIR ARMOR AND PREPARE FOR BATTLE.

HEY, TUBBY, THE KID...FILM HIM. HE'S--

A HERO.

TIME TO PROVE I--

WHO IS HE?

DOES IT MATTER?

can't...

...stay in the shadows. I... want to... but... not any longer.

It's Johnny Quick's time to fight...

...to die.

AND DESPITE IT ALL... JOHNNY SMILES.

3X2 (9YZ) 4A

GNNN!

DYNAMAN... SWOOPING INTO THE CROWD...

ONLOOKERS SCATTERING... OH NO... A CHILD...

HE'S GOING TO HIT A CH--

"LITTLE GIRL... SAME AGE"

"AS MY DAUGHTER... CAN'T LET--"

...LATEST FATALITY... THE SPORTSMASTER, A REFORMED VILLAIN...

DAMN IT... EVEN THE VILLAINS ...MY VILLAIN... MORE HERO THAN ME... I'M...

...RECENTLY RECRUITED BY THOM--

NO MORE!

...DENYING MY FATE.

IT'S WHAT I SWORE. IN BRIGHTEST DAY, IN BLACKEST NIGHT... IT'S WHAT I SWORE.

ROBOTMAN, WHY ARE YOU...? DIDN'T YOU HEAR?

THOMPSON IS--

KNOWN ALWAYS.

CARE NOT.

YOU ALL RIGHT, HON?

YEAH... COUGH...

I...

IS HE FINISHED?

NICE TRY.

GUESS NOT.

LANCE... TOUCH THE GODDAMN MARK.

LET TRIUMPH DO IT.

NO! GO TO HELL!!

...AND TAKE THIS BIG METAL BASTARD WITH YOU!

OH

BRO

JOHNNY...

...IT'S ME. I'M HERE.

LIBBY?

HOW...

WE NEED A MIRACLE.

...ARE WE DOING?

HEY...

...VILLAIN.

YOU ARE HISTORY!

I think we've got it.

...the big guy's back.

OH?

NNN!

DGG!

GH!

CH!

N!

D!

GHRRR

HE'S THE ONE... THE ONE TO BEAT HIM.

THE LANTERN... IF ANYBODY COULD...

NO...

...KOFF...KOFF... HE'S WEAKENING, DON'T YOU SEE? HE'S NOT GOING TO MAKE IT.

GOT TO... I'VE...

JOHNNY, YOU'RE HURT. WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

TO GET A HERO... ONE LAST HERO.

ONE LAST CHANCE.

SIRS! GENTLEMEN!...

...STOP, YOU'RE KILLING EACH OTHER.

STOP... I SAID...

STOP!!

SO MUCH CRAZINESS.

I DON'T KNOW... WHO'S IN THE WRONG ...WHAT TO DO...

CONFUSED ...I'M...

NO.

PAUL... GET THE GUN!

the Humanite's closer--reaches the gun. it doesn't matter.

you're not the prey. not anymore. he is.

NO!!

KILL YOU!

he's dead.

THORNS IN MY SIDE.

NN!

BREAHHHH!!

he's dead.

DEAD!!

d

d...uh...u...

D...

YOU...'RE

...DEAD.

NNTTHH!

THAT... W...AS... FUN.

BUT G...GAME'S OV...ER.

JOHNNY, YOU BROUGHT... TED? BUT I THOUGHT HE WAS--

HE *IS* OUR LAST CHANCE... *STARMAN*...

WHO ELSE IS THERE?

FIEND!

EH?

THE EVIL YOU'VE DONE... THE EVIL YOU ARE. IT ENDS NOW...

...PREPARE FOR COSMIC RETRIBUT--

YES... WELL...

...SO MUCH...FOR THAT.

IS...THERE NO ONE... E...ELSE?

IF I...HAD... THOUGHT TH... IS WOULD BE S..SO... EASY...

...I... MIGHT HAVE DONE...IT SOO...NER.

HEROES NEVER QUIT.

NEVER.

NEVER!

THE ROD... BROKEN... BUT *STILL* A WEAPON.

...CAN *STILL* USE IT.

SOMEONE... HAS A PLAN... SUDDEN... DESPERATE...

...WHILE A PHOTOGRAPHER LURKS AMONG THE RUBBLE.

FINGERS... FUMBLING... FOCUSING... TRYING TO..

THE SHUTTER CLICKS...

GO ON THEN... *DO IT...*

I'M NOT AFRAID!

AND POSTERITY CAPTURES A YOUNG MAN'S DEFIANCE.

GNN!

UH...

GOTT.

CRUNNUDT

As you can imagine... after that...

...the rest of the year seemed rather quiet.

He was supposed to be invulnerable...but... things are often supposed to be what they're not.

I guess we wore him down...all of us...a piece at a time...a punch at a time.

I guess. Who can say?

1955.

Maybe there were more answers to be found in the Humanite's diary. But the government confiscated it... and promptly denied its existence.

In fact, they denied everything ...all the fantastic stuff. Thompson was a hero gone bad. Dunbar was a hero gone mad.

And that was that.

Hmmn...ha...and with the memory of that whole horrible day ebbing year by year, I sometimes think they might be right.

Sometimes.

God...look at the time...look at the date. Have to get a Christmas tree tomorrow. I've left it late...I've less than a week.

Winter in the San Fernando Valley. The only time it dips below 70...the only time it's livable.

Still...T.V.'s got Libby working here...so I'm working here. No complaints.

Five years...five years older...later. God...how things have changed... have stayed the same. For me...for Libby...

...for everyone.

Ted Knight got better, slowly... happier. In '53 he got married... to a girl with average looks and a great sense of humor. Just what he needed.

Ted doesn't work at night much anymore.

Paul Kirk recovered from his injuries, liquidated his assets, and returned to Kenya to hunt and find himself.

He disappeared in the jungle in '51.

Alan Scott did the only thing he could... he bought into television. And ended up leading the race... as ever.

Al founded a writing scholarship in '54... named it after a staff writer he used to have... Charlie Bowles.

And to me, he'll always be... "the big guy."

Tyler Chemicals thrives... with poor, hard-working Rex seeming to grow more desperate and wanting, day by day.

Then... he'll snap... vanish for weeks. And in that time the bulky silhouette of Hourman is seen bounding across the skyline.

One day, maybe, Rex will tame his inner demons.

Maybe.

Judging from his attitude nowadays, Al Pratt, the Atom, learned something from his mistake.

Johnny Thunder on the other hand...

Poor Paula. With Lance's death, she went off the deep end.

Last I heard she'd made the F.B.I.'s most wanted list.

They say it's only a matter of time before she kills someone.

And Libby... maybe it's time she and I re-tied the knot.

But she rediscovered her independence during her time with Jon Law, and now she's loath to jeopardize it.

Whatever.

As long as she doesn't stop loving me...

...I'm happy.

Anyway, like I say, things changed and stayed the same.

Thompson's death left a void within the power structure of the senate. Joe McCarthy stepped into the spotlight. one bastard for another.

The witch hunt continues, with one of its casualties being...

...The Justice Society... who disbanded...vanished into a puff of smoke on another grey day in Washington.

And no one seemed to care.

After all, they were the past.

The future...

...was that unknown kid who fought alongside us. Took the name of Captain Comet.

A photo taken of him that day... captured the public's heart with the promise of tomorrow.

Ironic, seeing as all he did was get his nuts crunched, while Libby... a woman... was the one who actually brought Dynaman down.

Still, he's brave... new. Like I say, he represents... he is the future.

And Comet isn't the only one...

...other heroes are coming forth... leaping into the headlines with an almost monotonous regularity.

Young heroes, young faces... young powers.

And it's their turn... their time.

For them, a new age... as fresh and clear and bright...

...As sterling Silver!